

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TRAINING TEACHERS FROM REMOTE AREAS

*"I like to work with young people and support them. Where I come from, schools closed down and I see the need to go back and work as a teacher, because there are not many teachers available in my region".*

Mathilda Patrick is a 26 year old woman from Iapiyu, a small village in Gulf Province three hours walking to Kaneabea, the regional centre. In 2011, she was successful in obtaining a scholarship from the European Union to study at Bomana Teachers' College. Mathilda was a dedicated student and, after her two-year training, graduated as a primary school teacher in November 2013.

*"The two years of studies were very challenging in terms tackling all the new knowledge and skills to be learned. Learning to be patient with children was the biggest challenge for me. I am the only one from that region who made it to the teacher college to study. I think the community and my family look at me as someone very particular, especially since I will be the only female teacher in the area."*

Mathilda is now teaching at Kamina Primary School, an isolated village located a five hour walk across rugged terrain from her home village.

As a single working mother, Mathilda can raise her two year old daughter who lives with her. Being able to work in her region has enabled her to maintain close ties with relatives.

*"To tackle job and my own child I will have the support of my parents. My parents live close, I can see them on the weekends. It is important for me to have my parents there to help and support me. And no, I am not planning to marry again at the moment. "*

Teaching in a remote area has many challenges. Where there are no teachers, schools are closed down. The provision of sufficient and adequately trained teachers is essential for all children, including those in the most remote villages, to have access to quality education.

*"It is difficult. The lack of power is a big challenge. The lack of resources and teaching aids too. There are not enough teachers in these villages, so we also face the challenge of teaching multi-grade classes, which for a teacher is a complex task."*

*"I would like to thank my mother and my brothers for supporting me. My lecturers deserve also my gratefulness. Last but not least have to say I would not be teacher now without the scholarship of the European Union, tenk yu tumas."*



*Mathilda Patrick (right) with fellow student Gloria Kuanu from Jinjo village, Rossel Island, Milne Bay Province at their graduation ceremony from Bomana Sacred Heart Teacher College on 2.*

## **Human Resources Development Programme Phase 1 Fact Box**

Shortage of primary school teachers and facilities continue to be a problem in Papua New Guinea's (PNG) education system. Many schools lack qualified teachers, especially in remote communities.

The education system also lacks the capacity and resources to address all the issues it is currently facing

The EU has supported Papua New Guinea to develop its human resources for over 20 years. The Human Resources Development Project 1 project (EUR16.8m) continues this partnership with the Government of PNG to address some of these problems:

- Scholarships will be provided to 900 trainee primary school teachers from remote rural areas of which at least 50 % are female. 220 teachers (including Mathilda and Gloria) have already graduated under the scholarship programme and another 700 will be sponsored in 2015
- Classrooms and dormitories in three teacher training colleges will be built in 2015
- Lecturers in teacher training colleges are undergoing capacity development in pedagogy and curriculum development. A gender balance is ensured in the participants.
- Gender based violence, equality and equity is also addressed through the training that is being run by the project. Lecturers are encouraged and trained on how to sensitize their curriculum and teaching pedagogies. In addition participants are introduced to conflict resolution strategies in difficult situations
- Education managers at national and subnational in 2015 will undergo training in public financial management